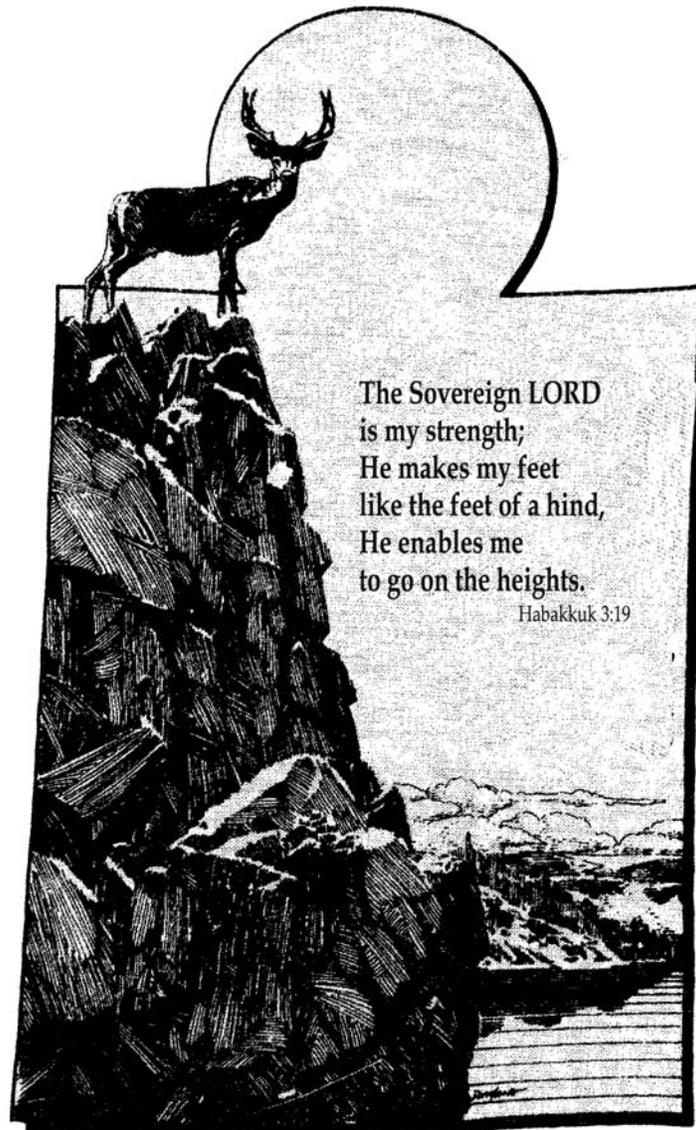


Going to the High Places

Introduction to the Hinds' Feet On High Places Study Guide Series



The Sovereign LORD
is my strength;
He makes my feet
like the feet of a hind,
He enables me
to go on the heights.

Habakkuk 3:19



Restoration Ministries International

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Restorationministries.org

Hinds' Feet on High Places

Introduction

Welcome to a wonderful journey!

Hinds' Feet on High Places is an insightful guide to help convey a Hebraic lifestyle that focuses on Jesus. One of those classics that emphasizes the lifelong Christian journey, *Hinds' Feet* crystallizes issues that **all** followers of Jesus face if you yearn to be transformed into the character of Jesus and faithfully find the welcome of salvation at your journey's end.

The allegory format chosen by Hannah Hurnard penetrates your heart with deep spiritual truths as surely as a spear point. By using the physical realm which can be visualized, your spirit can better grasp the transformation process each self-denying, Jesus-exalting step of the way.

As you put yourself into the story, you can reflect on your own life. Perhaps more clearly than ever before you'll appreciate the encounters and circumstances that our Father intended for a very special purpose: to help transform your character into the likeness of Jesus.

Frantic busyness, aching personal pain, agonizing betrayal — a whole host of factors have together convinced many to give up "ascending to the High Places." Through our study of the various elements of *Hind's Feet on High Places*, we hope to strengthen your resolve to press on in your own transformation process.

At the same time, Sue and I hope that you'll be able to help others to cooperate with the Holy Spirit so that they too can walk along the path that brings our Father such joy — to see His children growing more like His Son.

[You can find indepth discussion of this process in our December 2002 newsletter, *Acquire the Character of Jesus*.]

A Journey on the High Seas

Hinds' Feet holds a special place in Sue's

and my own faith pilgrimage. About 18 months before proclaiming Jesus as Lord of my life I had been challenged to read the Bible for the first time. I got myself a small pocket edition to carry with me. My initial motivation was to disprove the Bible to the person who'd challenged me in the first place. Not noble, I admit, but that alone got me into it!

I made a pact with myself that I wouldn't sit in the bathroom without reading that Bible. (It proved to be a great place of privacy, and nature's calls guaranteed uninterrupted daily study!)

I read through my copy twice in a little over a year, but what a profound motivational change the second time around! I'd discovered the first time that I couldn't disprove the truth of God's Word. I pored through it the second time to see what God wanted from me.

As I read I was becoming increasingly frustrated with my religious heritage and practices. Finally, one night as I was stretched out on my bunk reading my Bible, the Lord Himself spoke to my spirit, inscribing in my heart what I needed to do to follow Him.

Shortly after yielding my life to follow Jesus, I left for the Far East on a 10-month Navy deployment. I asked Him to connect me only with other men who were devoted to my Lord. I'd had enough of the empty religious practice of my past. My heart's desire was to search out everything Jesus wanted both *for me* and *from me* no matter the cost.

Among the 600 men of the ship's company I located 3 who were on a similar spiritual journey. Two books, along with the Bible, became instrumental in our Christian training. The first was *Hinds' Feet on High Places*. As I look back, it seems strange that a book about a young crippled girl could have had such a powerful impact on the lives of grown men. But we were readily able to see ourselves in her odyssey, especially as we encountered our own shipboard adversaries.

The other book that focused us on fol-

lowing Jesus was *In His Steps*, an old classic by Charles Sheldon. In this fictional story a pastor challenges his congregation to spend the next year being guided in thought, word and deed by the question, “**What would Jesus do?**” The resulting changed lives of the characters in the book inspired our little fellowship to do likewise.

These two books so gripped my soul that for years I could recommend only these two books and the Bible! During that cruise Sue mailed me boxloads of these books! In turn, I wrote joyful letters about the wonderful things God was doing aboard the ship. And to my immense delight, she soon reported that she too was a follower of Jesus!

Halfway through the cruise Sue and our little boy met up with me in the Philippines. The next day she and I and several men from the ship hiked up to a mission village north of Manila, where we were baptized in a stream that flowed through the jungle.

The truth of the Bible and the influence of the two books prompted great changes in us Christians on the ship. We saw the Book of Acts being relived, both through the miraculous works of the Holy Spirit and in the numbers of men who were putting their trust in Jesus. Lives were being changed!

We were experiencing what Jesus had promised: “*I tell you the truth, anyone who has trust in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father*” (John 14:12). Walking in confident trust in our Lord, we experienced most of the miracles we’d read in His Word, from divine healings to demonic deliverances.

If we saw it in the Word of God, we believed it was relevant to our own lives in Jesus. We also learned about devotion to one another as family in Jesus. If we had any disagreements we relied on the command in Philippians 3:15,16: “*If on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. Only let us live up to what we have already attained.*”

Paralleling the journey of Much-Afraid and Sheldon’s characters who pledged to be

guided by “What would Jesus do?”, we brothers on the ship discovered that as we began our own journey to the High Places, people responded differently to us. We were just men who wanted to represent Jesus in our actions and attitudes because we took His words seriously: “*Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven*” (Matt. 5:16).

As the only officer in the initial band of brothers, I found that even my presence was enough to arouse mocking and derision. Often without saying a word I ended up having to eat alone at my table, bombarded with filthy talk and coarse jokes at my expense. The enlisted brothers experienced that same ridicule and ostracism. But our comfort came by the sure knowledge that we’d left the “valley of humiliation” and were on our way to the High Places.

My worst persecutor was the senior watch officer. Angry that I was no longer practicing the traditions of his denomination, he scheduled me for nights on end for the midnight to 4 AM watch in the Combat Information Center. Picture night after night with little sleep, yet daily responsibilities to fly and carry out shipboard duties.

But everything we brothers endured caused us to intercede more for those who ridiculed us. God answered our prayers in such unexpected ways. One predawn following my watch I found three officers seated in my stateroom. Like Nicodemus and his nocturnal visit, they asked me to teach them about Jesus.

Another time, when flight operations were curtailed during a thunderstorm, I found myself in a room filled with men waiting for the storm to end. One of the men whom Jesus had healed from intestinal bleeding a few days earlier asked, “Would you teach us about Jesus?” Everyone became quiet, and for the next two hours I shared my Jesus with them.

These weren’t isolated instances! Shortly after we arrived at Okinawa to pick up a contingent of 2000 Marines, several of them walked up to me. “We heard you walk with

Jesus. Would you teach us about Him?"

These kinds of encounters were happening to all the brothers. God even changed the course of two typhoons in response to prayer to show Himself strong and to allow us to visit our families in Tokyo on time! The "altar" experiences along the path to the high places were precious jewels to each of us. We had no problem at all understanding the memorial stones that Much-Afraid stowed in her keepsake bag. Our journey to the High Places, refreshed with continual reminders to ask ourselves what Jesus would do, taught us the path of living for Jesus.

By cruise end our brotherhood had expanded to 125 men committed to following Jesus. And those of us who had seen Him use those two little books to complement His Word now had our own stories to relate! We had become living epistles flowing with testimonies from our own life experiences. We could heartily agree with John, "*We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you may also have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ*" (1 John 1:3; see also John 3:11).

And remember that vengeful Senior Watch Officer? At the end of the cruise the Lord impressed on me to go to him in private. Kneeling before him, I asked his forgiveness for having entertained bitter thoughts against him. I found out the very next day that he'd gone to the chaplain to request a Bible and sign up for the next ship's retreat!

The Covenant Gospel: A Pilgrimage

Many years after that momentous cruise Sue and I spent three months in Israel. Our research there on the earliest church reaffirmed the truth of salvation as a *pilgrimage*. A pilgrimage is a sacred journey that is chosen for purposes greater than your day-to-day life in the world. A pilgrim must leave behind the familiar and comfortable in order to complete the journey. The allegorical pilgrimage in *Hinds' Feet* hammers home the Hebraic framework of the Gospel our Father offers to each person on earth.

It's during your own life pilgrimage of trial and triumph that you are transformed into the nature of Jesus Christ. And at your journey's end awaits your salvation at the Judgment Throne of Jesus. This is how our earliest forefathers in the faith understood the Good News that was shared by Jesus and the Apostles.

[For more on the Gospel embraced by the early church, please read "The Gospel of the Covenant is the Pilgrimage to Salvation: <<http://www.restorationministries.org/pdf/hebraicArticles/GospOfCov.pdf>>]

So, where do you begin in order to get to the High Places? First, you fix your eyes on the *goal*! Can you identify with the *longing* of Abraham and the heroes of faith acclaimed in Hebrews 11? "[*Abraham*] was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. . . [Likewise we are] longing for a better country — a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called [our] God, for He has prepared a city for [us]" (Heb. 10: 10,16).

Secondly, you've been called to separate from much of what was once part of you. That separation can be scary! It's not just leaving behind those who don't want to go with you. The journey also brings a loss of your old identity. All of who you once were, your mind, will, and emotions, will be transformed during your journey. Your soul and spirit will be taken over more and more by the work of the Holy Spirit as He transforms your life and character. He intends for you to be a picture of "Jesus in the flesh" to everyone you encounter!

Paul's admonition still stirs the hearts of those focused on loving and living with Shepherd: "*Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to attest and approve what God's will is — His good, pleasing and perfect will*" (Rom. 12:2).

[We discuss at length the pilgrimage journey in our June/July 1999 newsletter, "*Crossing the Jordan*".]

As you're preparing yourself to leave your particular valley of humiliation, bitterness, fear, or whatever yours is, it's vital that

you keep this in mind: Our Lord intends to do a mighty work in your life! You'll be called upon to recognize His hand and to cooperate with Him during your odyssey!

I'd like to address men in particular here. We men frequently struggle with the whole idea of a pilgrimage. We tend toward immediate solutions to problems. It's often difficult for us to hold onto long-term goals and develop a plan of action to get us there. Men are often "sit-com" oriented; quick resolutions, then on to the next situation.

Compare this short-sighted view to a man whose life goal is to "*get married*" versus a man whose goal is "*being married*". Once the former, whose goal is only *getting* married, achieves his goal at the wedding ceremony, he refuses to walk in the role of husband. The time he spends with his wife involves only his personal wants and needs. He doesn't provide for her, concern himself with her desires or needs, maybe doesn't even care if she spends more time with others than with him. He's got what *he* wanted; he's "married", with no personal cost, no self-denial, no growth in "husbandhood". In other words, he demonstrates no evidence that he's any different now than when he was single.

Is there any wonder that this self-centered attitude and self-gratification motivation underlie the epidemic of divorce both within the church and outside of it?

True salvation is more like a person who seeks the lifelong growth in intimacy and companionship of *being* married. The ceremony is just the beginning. From that moment on he devotes himself to growing deeper in union with his beloved in hard times as well as in good. When he is confronted with personal complacency or sin, he responds in humble repentance because *his goal* is that important to him! And as he grows deeper in love and obedient trust in Jesus, he finds his love for his wife correspondingly deepens.

Does this sound like *a lot of work* to you? Well, so do dying to self with each decision and taking up your cross each day! But when your focus is on Jesus and the joy set before

you, that striving becomes a privilege. Take Paul's words seriously: "*Therefore, my dear friends, since we have these promises [of His presence housed in us as our Lord, and His marvelous reconciliation], let us **purify ourselves** from everything that can defile either body or spirit, and **strive** to be completely holy, out of reverence for God*" (2 Cor. 7:1).

Salvation, then, represents your ongoing journey to the High Places with your indwelling Shepherd. The pilgrimage that our Hebraic forefathers understood begins with a biblical command: to publicly acknowledge that Jesus is **Lord** of your life. This implicitly means that you are His beloved bondservant/slave! From that critical point the transformation of your character into His character can begin.

Deeper Into the Funnel

*"If you acknowledge publicly with your mouth that **Jesus is Lord** and trust in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be delivered. For with the heart one **goes on** trusting and thus continues toward righteousness, while with the mouth one **keeps on** making public acknowledgement and thus continues toward deliverance"* (Rom. 10:9,10, JNT).

Examine the funnel diagram on the next page. The funnel represents another visual snapshot of your pilgrimage to the High Places.

The **Lordship of Jesus** is your entry point to your pilgrim path in Him and into the funnel. In order to progress deeper into the funnel to mature into increasing Christlikeness, you must respond to Jesus as He really is — **LORD!**

This means learning to reject or to yield to Him all that you are in your sin nature — all of your will, your rights, your possessions, your plans. You become His "disciple". It is a conversion that demands that you weigh the cost. The depth of that relationship is revealed in Jesus' words: "*If anyone comes to me and does not hate [in comparison to their intense love for Him] his father*

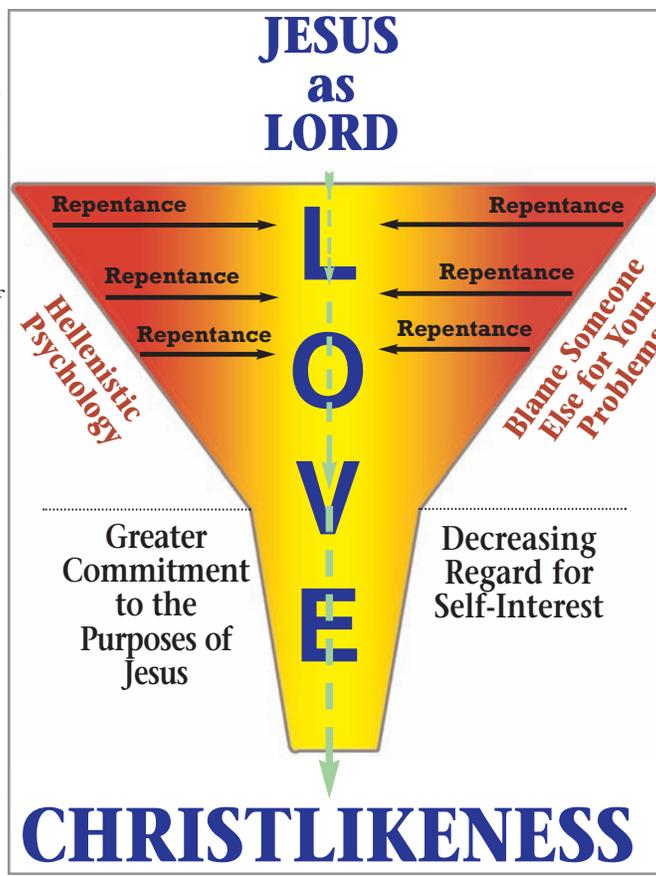
and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters — yes, even his own life — he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his own cross [his decisions to deny himself and kill self-will] and follow me cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26,27).

While your discipleship journey calls you to ever-increasing obedient trust in our Master, His love is the power that draws you onward. Like the invisible pull of gravity, your humble choice to submit to the Lordship of Jesus at

each and every step of your path draws you downward into the funnel. Isn't this what Much-Afraid does as she places each memorial stone in her bag?

The tug of His faithfulness never lets go! When you sin, His Spirit seeks you out and brings you to repentance through His kindness (see Romans 2:4). God pursues you to the point of your yielding so that your broken heart and spirit can once again enjoy the fullness of His presence as your Lord and continue your journey. *Repentance* is what keeps you in the center of the funnel, and brings you back to the center of His love whenever you sin. Repentance is also what keeps you from stopping or turning back on your journey to the High Places.

As you progress along your pilgrimage you pass into the funnel stem. Here the love of Jesus is so compelling that you don't desire to think about yourself, but *only to do His will*. (You'll encounter this truth later in Chapter 15, *The Floods*, when Much-Afraid pulls the stones from her keepsake bag to



recount and take ownership of her “altar” experiences.)

Your personal discretion to choose what *you* want to do withers as you continue to yield yourself as a beloved bondservant to His will. God's goal for you as His child is to be changed by His Spirit into Christlikeness in such a way that there truly is evidence that you are a “new creation.” And that creation is *you* being conformed to the character of Jesus.

Those who embrace a false gospel of “being saved” as a sort of fire insurance fail to get hold of the pilgrimage which our Father wants for His children. Those who are unaware of the salvation pilgrimage cling to the sides of the funnel, their old nature, and refuse to allow it to die. The sins that plagued them before their “conversion” still dominate them because they have never chosen to die to self and rise up in Jesus (see Romans 6). In a sense, the sides of the funnel are like the “Valley of Humiliation” that must be fled in order to move on to the High Places.

Tragically, through the influx of rationalization and psychology into the church, *sins* that call for repentance are now considered “problems” to be considered. No longer are believers held accountable to take personal responsibility for their own sins. Failure to repent finds them always bogged down in defeat, unable to escape the sides of the funnel. Only through repentance can they come into the center of the funnel of Jesus' love,

where their spiritual eyes are solely on Him, not on their own fleshly needs and desires.

And consider this: Hellenist-influenced pastoral counseling convinces troubled believers to analyze their past to find out *who is at fault* for their problems. While analysis may reveal factors that contributed to their distress, the individual never passes from victim to victor.

Grievously, those who choose to cling to unforgiveness find festering in their hearts a wound of distrust against God. They perceive that since He didn't protect them from their past hurt, He won't be found reliable in any of His promises either. Thus many Christians survive as perceived perpetual victims of both God and the people or circumstances from their past. Until they hold on to even a rudimentary trust in the Sovereign Lord from Whom nothing is hidden, they'll never climb out of their valley of hurt.

The Hebraic pattern of dealing with past hurts and wrongs committed against you calls you to first stop seeing yourself as a victim. Then repent for your bitter unforgiveness and resentful attitudes. Confess them to our Lord and purpose to leave them behind in the dust where they can be consumed. True freedom calls you to tear down the bondage bars by forgiving from your heart. And our Father may even prompt *you* to ask forgiveness for all those years of bitterness and unforgiveness that kept Him from using your life for His purposes!

As you'll discover on your journey to the High Places, you must choose to forgive in your heart the one(s) who have hurt you. After you have forgiven them, whenever they come to mind, pray God's blessings for them. Then watch how our Lord brings His healing to you. HE takes away the sting of the memory and releases His peace so you can press on. As you choose to keep your focus forward on Him, your testimony of His healing brings Him praise and offers hope to others.

Choosing the Path of Life

On the pilgrimage that leads to your sal-

Hebraic Healing—the path to the High Places

- Reflect, repent, forgive from the heart
- Focus on Jesus and press on
- Glorify our Father through testimonies of healing and hope

Hellenist Analysis — the prison in the valley

- Dwell in past regret, identify someone to blame
- Plod on as a victim, waiting for vengeance
- Grumble about the present, ignore the future

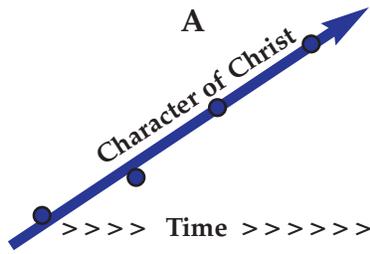
vation by Jesus, your starting point is *justification* through His blood sacrifice. The penalty for your sins has been paid for by our Lord! From then on, your journey is a process of *sanctification* as the Holy Spirit aligns your mind, will and emotions into conformity with the character of Jesus.

Being "sanctified", or set apart for God's purposes, calls you to immerse yourself in His Word so that you can walk in the truth He has revealed. Then, as you encounter those in the world who need His truth, you'll be equipped and empowered by His Spirit to serve our Father's purposes. Jesus eloquently revealed this process: "**Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message**" (John 17:17-20).

The awesome responsibility and privilege of your faith walk is affirmed by Paul: "*Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose*" (Phil. 2:12,13).

The four diagrams on the next page represent various potential pilgrimage paths. Only one leads to the High Places. If character development in Jesus could be measured, the dots represent where you would find an individual over time. As you study them, try to determine which one best describes your experience to date.

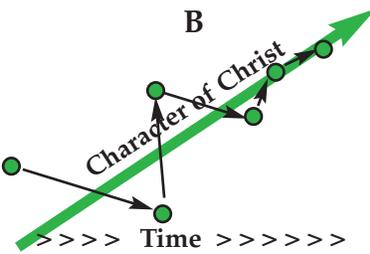
Diagram A pictures an ideal yet unreal path. No one is an absolute reflection of the character of Jesus, especially at the beginning of their pilgrimage! Otherwise, they would have no need to be sanctified, or made holy, through the sufferings and battle victories they undergo throughout their life.



Now, some people may have an easy-to-get-along-with nature that fools others into thinking that they're Christlike already. In fact, they may even deceive themselves into thinking they're "Christian" just because they don't think they've sinned! But this *appearance* of personal goodness may be the very block that keeps them from perceiving their heart's depravity and need to humble themselves before the Cross.

Hidden attitudes of the heart that are contrary to the Word of God may be harder to detect than outright offensive actions, but they still need to be recognized as sin to turn away from so that forgiveness can be received from our Lord.

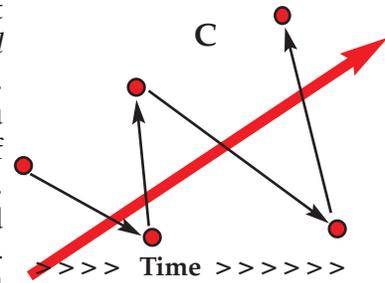
Diagram B depicts a more typical salvation pilgrimage. When you first responded to the Holy Spirit and put your trust in Jesus, your personality with its old inclinations and rationale still ruled your mind, will and emotions. Over time, as you study and internalize and apply God's Word, as you experience suffering for your faith, as you repent from your sins at the Spirit's conviction, a change in your character takes place.



He empowers you to conform increasingly to the motivations and character of Jesus. Your growing love and desire to please

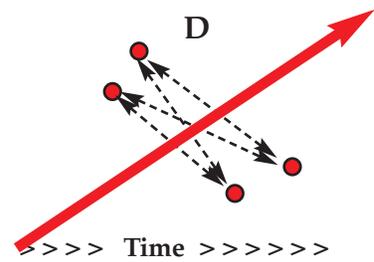
Him make following your old inclinations painfully unthinkable, or so dirty when you stumble that you resist more staunchly the next time. Diagram B, like the funnel mentioned earlier, depicts the pilgrimage nature of gradually becoming conformed to the character of Jesus.

Diagram C represents people who may be very knowledgeable about Christian truths but *aren't changed* by them. Perhaps you know some of these folks. They attend lots of conferences, read all the latest Christian books, take part in the liveliest worship. But something is terribly missing.



During their pilgrimage their heads become more filled with knowledge but their hearts are unchanged. They can talk *Christianese*, but their character doesn't reflect Jesus any more than when they first began the journey.

Diagram D illustrates the "hinged" Christian. He moves back and forth but *goes nowhere* along the narrow path. "As a door turns on its hinges, so a sluggard turns on his bed" (Prov. 26:14). He never gets out of his old behavioral rut.



Some emotional event or stirring encounter may briefly shake him, but then he returns to the same place. Nothing really changes in his life, especially if he's been taught that "he's saved" and that's the sum total of all he needs to know about Jesus!

Because he attends church service and Sunday school, he perceives that he's "in motion" along the path. But he has no devotion to Jesus, no evidence by his decisions or

life that the Holy Spirit is dwelling within.

“Hinge” Christians may be religious by habit but have no connection to the Vine. Most typically they flee relationships that could hold them accountable to turn from sin and press on in their pilgrimage to Christ-likeness. Because of their spiritual activities they think they’re moving onward, but to others they appear to be pivoting in place covering the same old turf.

Guidelines

Whether this is your first journey to the High Places or a return trip, examine your own pilgrimage thus far. Which diagram most accurately reflects where *you* are at this point? Ask our Lord to open your eyes of understanding as you venture on in this series with Much-Afraid so that you will see His path more clearly and yearn to count the cost of being conformed to His character.

We’d like you to be able to follow along easily as you read the book and go through this study guide. In each of the chapters of the book we have numbered our paragraphs sequentially to correspond with the paragraph indents of the author. For instance, when we want to cover something in the third paragraph of Chapter 1, our discussion will begin with the number of the paragraph and a few words from the first sentence, such as:

3. In the first place...

We trust that you will be blessed as you journey with us. You may have been to the High Places before and this is a return trip. We have found in each return there were other things our Lord needed to prune along the way so that we could be more effective in what He was calling us into.

After every trip to the High Places you become burdened to serve the Lord Jesus in a greater way. Over the years we’ve found an increasing militancy in our love—a loving burden to do whatever is needed to bring glory to our Father, and to extend His Kingdom! We believe you will find a similar new purpose upon your return from the High Places.



Your Sovereign LORD
is your strength;
He will make your feet
like the feet of a hind,
He will enable you
to go on the heights.
Habakkuk 3:19